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EM-331

Comments on the Rocky Flats Plan for Certification of Non Radioactive
Hazardous Waste

T. E. Lukow, Director
Waste Management and Environmental Division, Rocky Flats Office

Information on the approach to be used by the Rocky Flats (RF) Plant to ensure that radioactive material is not inadvertently included in offsite hazardous waste shipments has been provided. This information has been reviewed for consistency with the "Performance Objective (PO) for Certification of Non Radioactive Hazardous Waste." Comments developed by the review team are included in the attachment.

As you are aware, the Plan does not provide the necessary procedural details to comply with the PO. However, based on the review team comments, it appears that an appropriate plan is in place to develop these procedures. If acceptable procedures are developed expeditiously with consideration given to the review team comments, the moratorium can be lifted at RF in a timely manner. We request that you inform us of the date that you expect to submit for review the complete package of procedures and other documentation needed to comply with the PO.

One item of concern is the proposed approach, as we understand it, to classify some waste as mixed even though the waste may not contain any Department of Energy (DOE) added radioactivity. This approach is proposed for: (1) Radioactive Materials Management Area (RMMA) waste that is not cost-effective to evaluate or (2) non-RMMA waste for which an appropriate method of treatment/disposal is not available. In the first case, although this approach does not violate the PO, it is inconsistent with the DOE waste minimization philosophy. Therefore, it will not hinder lifting the moratorium, but is something that DOE HQ will address in subsequent audits/self assessments. In the second case, it is important to recognize that a decision to manage non-RMMA waste in this manner cannot be attributed to the PO. From our perspective, this appears to be a violation of the Land Disposal Restrictions and is putting the site in a vulnerable position.

The review team leader, Steve Merwin, is available to confer with the site to resolve the comments. Steve can be reached at (509) 943-3133.

Lee Stevens

Lee E. Stevens, Director
Division of Regulatory Compliance
Office of Program Support
~~Environmental Restoration and~~
Waste Management

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Attachment

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cc: P. Bubar, EM-323
R. Duvall, EM-323
A. Lipinski, DP-6.1
R. Tyler, DOE-Rocky Flats Office
S. Merwin, SAIC

The Rocky Flats Plan for Certification of Non Radioactive Hazardous Waste has been reviewed by the following team:

Steve Merwin - SAIC/EM-331 support (Team Leader)
Ron Duvall - EM-323
Jim Flaherty - SAIC
Adam Lipinski - DP-6.1

Because the Plan does not provide the necessary procedural details to comply with the EM-30 Performance Objective (PO) for Certification of Non Radioactive Hazardous Waste, the review team focused on the overall approach described in the plan to determine whether it is likely the PO will be met under the proposed approach.

As described in the following specific comments, the plan contains both significant strengths and weaknesses. It is therefore recommended that Rocky Flats proceed with the development of specific procedures to comply with the PO consistent with the subject plan, with consideration given to the comments provided below. These procedures should be developed expeditiously so that the moratorium can be lifted as soon as possible.

Specific Comments

1. The QA information provided was insufficient for review. The package to be provided for review that will include the developed procedures should include evidence of adequate quality assurance provisions in accordance with the PO.
2. The proposed approach for determining background levels in uncontaminated waste for comparison with suspect waste is excellent. If successful, this approach will likely serve as a model for all DOE facilities.
3. The criteria used to define RMMA's are not clearly stated in the plan. The procedures developed must state these criteria, and should ensure that any area with the potential for contamination is classified as a RMMA in accordance with the PO.
4. Section 2.1.7 states that procedures will be developed to demonstrate conclusively that waste is non-radioactive. Be aware that it is impossible to demonstrate with 100% confidence that waste is non radioactive. Rather, the procedures developed must document the survey/sampling instrumentation and techniques, the statistical methods for comparing the waste measurements to background, the decision levels to be used for classifying waste as radioactive, and the associated detection limits and confidence levels.
5. Section 2.1.7 - The procedures developed must ensure that all hazardous waste sent offsite includes a certification that no DOE-added radioactivity is present.
6. The procedures developed must ensure that Performance Based Training is provided to those personnel performing waste radioactivity determinations in accordance with the PO.

7. Section 2.2.1, Item 5 states that gross alpha and gross beta measurements may be performed on non-RMMA waste. It is not clear why these measurements may be necessary.
8. Section 2.2.1, Item 8 states that "evaluations" of non-RMMA wastes may be performed. It is not clear what is meant by "evaluations."
9. Section 2.2.2 states that some RMMA waste will be evaluated and some will automatically be considered radioactive. It is also stated that this approach is explained further in Section 2.2.5, but the plan does not include a Section 2.2.5. In any event, the procedures developed must specify how the determination will be made as to whether a waste will be evaluated.
10. The RMMA decision diagram (Appendix 8) is not fully supported by the discussions in the Plan. The procedures developed must address all of the steps outlined in the diagram.